

Public Law 101-84  
101st Congress

Joint Resolution

Aug. 14, 1989  
[S.J. Res. 55]

To designate the week of October 1, 1989, through October 7, 1989, as "Mental Illness Awareness Week".

- Whereas mental illness is a problem of grave concern and consequence in American society, widely but unnecessarily feared and misunderstood;
- Whereas thirty-one to forty-one million Americans annually suffer from clearly diagnosable mental disorders involving significant disability with respect to employment, attendance at school, or independent living;
- Whereas more than ten million Americans are disabled for long periods of time by schizophrenia, manic depressive disorder, and major depression;
- Whereas between 30 and 50 percent of the homeless suffer serious, chronic forms of mental illness;
- Whereas alcohol, drug, and mental disorders affect almost 19 percent of American adults in any six-month period;
- Whereas mental illness in at least twelve million children interferes with vital developmental and maturational processes;
- Whereas mental disorder-related deaths are estimated to be thirty-three thousand, with suicide accounting for at least twenty-nine thousand, although the real number is thought to be at least three times higher;
- Whereas our growing population of the elderly is particularly vulnerable to mental illness;
- Whereas estimates indicate that one in ten AIDS patients will develop dementia or other psychiatric problems as the first sign of the disease and as many as two-thirds of AIDS patients will show neuropsychiatric symptoms before they die;
- Whereas mental disorders result in staggering costs to society, estimated to be in excess of \$249,000,000,000 in direct treatment and support and indirect costs to society, including lost productivity;
- Whereas mental illness is increasingly a treatable disability with excellent prospects for amelioration and recovery when properly recognized;
- Whereas families of mentally ill persons and those persons themselves have begun to join self-help groups seeking to combat the unfair stigma of the diseases, to support greater national investment in research, and to advocate an adequate continuum of care from hospital to community;
- Whereas in recent years there have been unprecedented major research developments bringing new methods and technology to the sophisticated and objective study of the functioning of the brain and its linkages to both normal and abnormal behavior;
- Whereas research in recent decades has led to a wide array of new and more effective modalities of treatment (both somatic and psychosocial) for some of the most incapacitating forms of mental

illness (including schizophrenia, major affective disorders, phobias, and phobic disorders);

Whereas appropriate treatment of mental illness has been demonstrated to be cost effective in terms of restored productivity, reduced utilization of other health services, and lessened social dependence; and

Whereas recent and unparalleled growth in scientific knowledge about mental illness has generated the current emergence of a new threshold of opportunity for future research advances and fruitful application to specific clinical problems: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled*, That the seven-day period beginning October 1, 1989, and ending October 7, 1989, is designated as "Mental Illness Awareness Week", and the President is authorized and requested to issue a proclamation calling upon the people of the United States to observe that week with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

Approved August 14, 1989.

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LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—S.J. Res. 55:

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 135 (1989):

June 9, considered and passed Senate.

Aug. 4, considered and passed House.